

BRIDGES

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Our 25th Year!



M A I R O N I S

Lithuania's poets remembered — Maironis and Brazdžionis...The Future of the LAC

P E R S P E C T I V E S

Summer is waning, but the memories linger and serve as fuel for the fall and winter seasons. This holds true especially for our Lithuanian youth who so enjoyed their weeks at several Lithuanian summer camps.

Lithuanian-Americans established many summer camps for scouts, the "futurists" (ateitininkai), families, children of all ages, and college students many years ago. My husband and I knew of no other way to spend the summer than going to the various summer camps as youths.

These camps helped develop our cultural sense and individual psyches. They also brought together Lithuanians from far and wide — helping us realize that we were not alone in life.

Our own children, along with our friends' and relatives' children, have been going to camps since they were literally infants. With the establishment of family camps, the essence of our bi-culturism was vaccinated into their very beings. As children grew, they were brought to the different camps for experiences unique to the Lithuanian organizations that sponsored them. From there, as young adults, they had the choice to continue their summer quests through student get-togethers and camps.

The wonderful aspect of these camps is that they are found all over the country, including Canada. The connections we made, as our children are making, is phenomenal. They have a true appreciation of the ties that bind as a Lithuanian-American community.

All the camps have finished off their runs. The AOL Instant Messengers ring constantly when my sons are on the web. As they sit and talk with their friends from camp, you can still see the summer glow on their faces. For them, summer camp has not ceased — it continues in their beings as they plan for the following year.

Rasa Ardyš-Juška

Editor

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BRIDGES Consultants

ALGIMANTAS GEČYS, President,

Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

TERESE GEČYS, Information Services.

RASA ARDYŠ-JUŠKA, Editor

RAMAS PLIŪRA, Treasurer, Lithuanian-

American Community, Inc., and

Subscriptions Manager.

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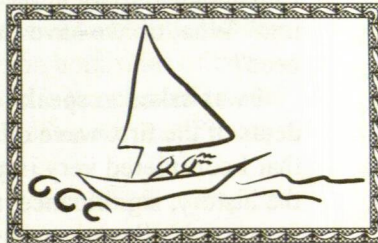
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Flooding in Europe and In Lithuania

Europe has been experiencing devastating floods during these summer months. Lithuania has had to cope with them for a long time and continues to do so from spring into summer.

"The village of Mingė is called the Venice of Lithuania because it has no roads. The branches of the Nemunas river, towards which all the houses face, are used as roads. People visit their neighbors or go to the shops by boat. Even children do not go to school for weeks if the flooding is so intense that boats have trouble getting through."

— Jolanta Paškevičienė,

♦ "All Aboard the Ark!" from *Lithuania in the World*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2002

Jen (Jane) Cox

**TIKĖKIME SAVO ATEITIMI!—
LET'S BELIEVE IN OUR FUTURE!**

Conference on the Future of the Lithuanian-American Community

On June 7 to the 9th, 2002, at the Lithuanian Youth Camp Dainava in Manchester, Michigan, a significant working conference, entitled "Tikėkime savo ateitimi" (Let's believe in our Future) was held, organized by the Lithuanian-American Community (LAC).

The meeting brought together about 40 Lithuanians from across the United States, most of whom are new to Lithuanian-American activity, to discuss the future of Lithuanian American activity in the US and particularly the future of the LAC. Significantly, the meeting was made up mostly of young people, and most of the participants were new immigrants, members of the "third wave" of Lithuanian immigration to the US, those who have come in the years since independence. A small number of participants were from the second wave, those who came over after WWII and their children, and one participant was the descendent of turn of the century Lithuanian immigrants to the US (the "first wave" of immigration).

What united all of us was our determination to strengthen and continue Lithuanian social

and cultural activity in the US, to fight through some of the painful barriers which have historically divided and continue to divide Lithuanians of the different waves of immigration, and to determine what new paths we must develop to keep our community alive.

To begin the conference, a representative of each wave of immigration was asked to respond to three questions: What do we have in Lithuanian activity in the U.S.? What is lacking? What do we have to do to get what we need?

I was asked to speak representing descendants of the first wave of immigration, a task that I considered very important, as I feel that the history, significance, and current efforts of first wave Lithuanians is often unknown to Lithuanians of all waves, and in particular to those who have lived here for decades. For example, I have found that many Lithuanians in this country do not know that in the mountains of Pennsylvania, in the anthracite coal mining regions, there are still people who speak Lithuanian, sing Lithuanian songs, dance, and uphold Lithuanian activities and traditions after 100 years in the United States.

JEN (JANE) COX is an active member of the Philadelphia chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

Equally important is that this active Lithuanian life persists in the former Lithuanian "capital" of the U.S., in the area surrounding the city of Shenandoah, which has for more than a hundred years played a significant role in both Lithuanian and American history. The virtual lack of connection between Lithuanians of different immigration generations underscores for me the need to figure out various ways to record, document, and share our history as Lithuanians in the United States – to understand the significance and struggles of each wave of immigration.



*Some of the participants of the conference. The author is sixth from the right.
Photo: Gražina Kriaučiūnienė*

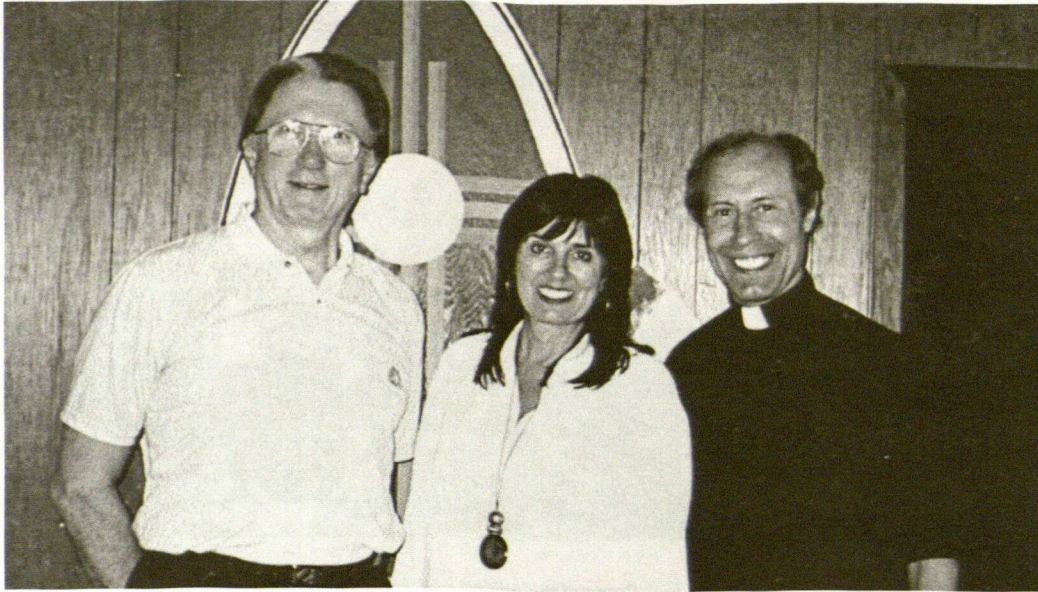
The need for this sharing was made clear during the meeting in Dainava as well. The conference itself was, I believe, a very important first step toward allowing this kind of deep and honest discussion among Lithuanians of many different experiences who all find ourselves here in the United States. We are all the products of and the inheritors of the history of Lithuania and of the history of Lithuanians here in the United States. The beauty and the tragedy of our history, on both sides of the ocean, is all of ours, and it has created in one way or another who all of us are – and it has both united and divided us.

We need to open up discussions to explore our history in all of its facets, in all of its complexity and pain, so that we can understand who we are, who each other are, and what our full story as a *tauta*, or nation, is. This will allow us to truly build a future for Lithuania, on both sides of the ocean – a Lithuania that respects each other and can learn from each other, regardless of where our history has placed us. The significance of the LAC conference was that it began this process in a very solid way.

Thanks to the careful organizing work of

Romualdas Kriaučiūnas, Birutė Bublienė, Aldas Kriaučiūnas, Saulius Anužis, and the LAC as a whole. The group gathered was a very committed core of mostly newly active Lithuanian-Americans, mostly newly arrived from Lithuania, anxious to keep Lithuania alive in the United States, in one form or another. We discussed everything from developing exchanges between Lithuanian-American children and families in Lithuania to maintaining sports leagues, cultural activities (both popular and folk) to bring together people of different backgrounds across the country; from putting together a book on Lithuanian-American history to ensuring that information about social services, translation, opportunities, and Lithuanian-American organizations is available to every person leaving Lithuania for the U.S.

Most importantly, all participants and especially the youth from Lithuania who formed the meeting's majority – who are often considered by Lithuanians in the U.S. to be uninterested and uninvolved in Lithuanian activity – demonstrated their commitment to participate in and build Lithuanian community in the U.S., even though in some cases this may be different from that of other waves and in some ways



After religious services at the conference stand from left to right, Dr. Romualdas Kriauciūnas — Conference Organizer, Birutė Bublienė — Conference Coordinator, and Rev. Aloyzas Volskis.

Photo: Gražina Kriauciūnienė

similar.

The organizers of the conference deserve much credit for creating, both with the content and participant make-up of the conference and through the atmosphere during the weekend, a warm, comfortable environment in which all of us very quickly felt close to each other and thus able to share honestly in a sometimes painful discussion.

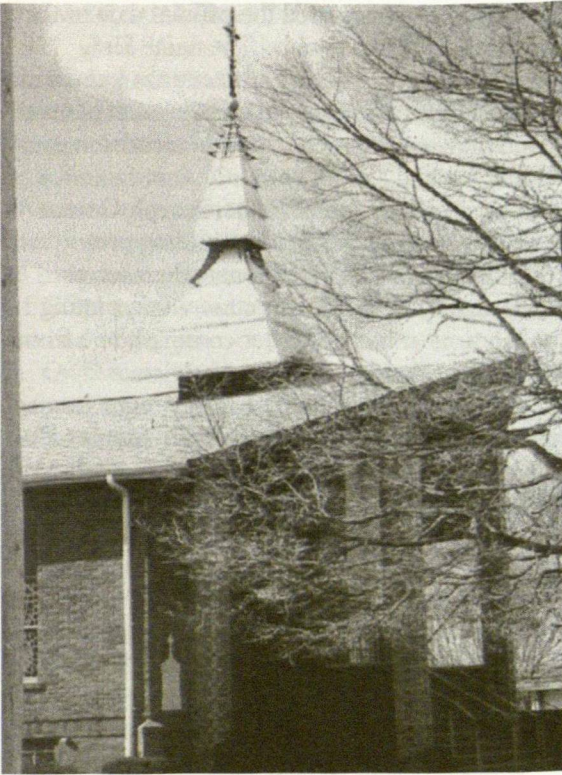
Throughout the weekend, there was a mood, a spirit, and warmth quickly developed that allowed for very difficult discussions to take place. The significance of the weekend, I feel, is that we did not avoid very painful yet very necessary themes, such as talking about each immigration wave's attitude toward members of other waves – assumptions that are often very harsh and uninformed, and that prevent us from understanding and respecting each other, not to mention working together.

We began an open discussion about the anger, mistrust, and misunderstanding that is found among Lithuanians of the different waves of immigration. The conference, I believe, showed that this honest dialogue is nec-

essary, and that as long as we don't take the courage to touch and delve into these issues seriously and deeply, even if it is painful, we will not be able to forge a common path that will allow us to build together toward the future and keep Lithuania alive in the United States.

While we left with a deeper grasp of the barriers and issues that confront us, I believe we also left with a sense of hope that, with struggle, we can build a future. *Tikėjime savo ateitimi -- Kurkime savo ateitį! Let's Believe In Our Future – Let's Create Our Future!* ♦

Judith A. Petrokas, Vytautas Bieliauskas and Leonas Grinius



The Lithuanian Community in Dayton, Ohio

In the heartland of America lies the quaint city of Dayton, Ohio. Dayton can lay claim to many things that have affected the world. Known as the birthplace of aviation, Dayton is the birthplace and was the home of Wilbur and Orville Wright, inventors of the first successful heavier-than-air flights. The first airplane was designed and engineered in their bike shop located in Dayton. Aeronautical research and development continues at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton.

One of the most widely known Dayton products is the cash register that was developed and made by the National Cash Register (NCR) Company and used throughout the world. The self-starter for the automobile was invented and developed by Charles F. Kettering of Dayton. One of the most outstanding and loved poets in

this country was Paul Laurence Dunbar, a native Daytonian.

Dayton, Ohio, also has one of the oldest Lithuanian communities in the United States. Lithuanians had settled in Cincinnati, Ohio earlier (1869), but many of them moved north to Dayton and beyond until the late 1960s.

The first Lithuanian immigrants arrived in Dayton in 1886. They were John Baczenas and Andrew Zitkus. In 1889 came the brothers Joseph and Anthony Slapikas, Vincent Ambrozaitis, Anthony Rinkwitz and Joseph Szlakis. By 1894 there were 24 Lithuanian families and about 50 single men – approximately 125 Lithuanians in Dayton. There were two taverns and a rooming house owned by Lithuanians. These early Lithuanians settled in the north part of the city called North Dayton and now known as Old

JUDITH A. PETROKAS, VYTAUTAS BIELIAUSKAS AND LEONAS GRINIUS are active members of the Dayton, Ohio chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

North Dayton.

The early history of the Lithuanian community is also the history of Holy Cross Roman Catholic Lithuanian Church. At first the Lithuanians of Dayton attended Our Lady of the Rosary Church whose pastor, Rev. John B. Frohmiller, learned some Lithuanian so that he could attend to the main needs of the people in the area. He even made some announcements in Lithuanian. However, the Lithuanians in Dayton came mostly from small villages and had been attached to their parishes in their native land. They wanted their own church where they could fully use their native language and continue their Lithuanian traditions.

In 1902 the Lithuanians in Dayton numbered more than 300. St. Peter's Fraternal Society was organized December 7, 1902, and began to actively plan for the establishment of a Lithuanian parish. At a meeting held May 23, 1909, the decision was made to proceed with this project. That same year St. Peter's Society purchased an eight-lot tract of land (1.1 acres) at the southwest corner of Leo and Lukaswitz (now Rita) streets. The price paid was \$1,500. A special delegation was sent to Archbishop Henry Moeller of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, of which Dayton was a part, requesting permission to organize a parish. Permission was granted in 1911.

The drive for donations was begun immediately. Many Lithuanians began making regular monthly payments that were picked up by door-to-door collectors. Picnics and socials were held for the building fund. The Lithuanians of Springfield, Columbus, and Cincinnati also contributed generously to this drive.

On July 5, 1912, an agreement was made with contractor Harry G. Helmig to pour the church foundation in accordance with plans prepared by architect William L. Jaeckle. Originally, plans were to build both a church and school. These plans were accepted for the future parish by A. Giedraitis, A. Gričius, K. Wareika and P. Savickas. On January 13, 1913, the foundation work was completed. Construction was temporarily halted because efforts to get a Lithuanian priest for the parish were unsuccessful. The Lithuanians in Dayton did not want to incur further debt until it was certain that they could ob-

tain a Lithuanian priest.

Finally, on May 1, 1914, Rev. Joseph Gričius was appointed as the first pastor of Holy Cross Parish. This is considered the official date of the establishment of the parish. The name Holy Cross was chosen, because Lithuania is known as the land of the crosses and the Lithuanian people often reminisce about the wayside crosses in their native land.

Under the direction of Father Joseph Gričius the construction of the church building progressed rapidly. The parishioners themselves helped greatly in the construction work, putting in much time at this task after coming home from their places of employment.

Early in the year 1914, the following committee worked on organizing the parish: Stanley Zukas, Joseph Slapikas, Matthew Valusis, Andrew Zitkus, Anthony Slapikas, Anthony Kudirka, Paul Dambrauskas and Peter Bartkus, Andrew Keydoszius, Alexander Gričius, Anthony Ardziejauskas, Joseph Meleskevicius, Joseph Valeckas, and Joseph Augustauskas. The first parish trustees were elected on September 10, 1914 and were Klemens Wareika, Anupras Giedraitis, Stanley Dambrauskas, Joseph Tulauskas, Joseph Naudzius, and Stanley Rugienis.

After much effort, work, and sacrifice, the building was completed. The new church was blessed on March 21, 1915. The new Lithuanian parish had considerable debt. Alexander Gričius and Anthony Ardziejauskas were selected to solicit contributions in other Lithuanian colonies. Parishioners paid \$2.00 per month as pew rent.

The first child baptized was John Zigmund Giedraitis on May 10, 1914. The first wedding took place on May 15, 1914 uniting Anthony Seskevics and Maria Kausas. May 8, 1914, was the date of the first funeral – Frank Ragavicius.

During the mid-1900s, there was another influx of immigrants from Lithuania and from other states in the United States. Russia was invading Lithuania, and many Lithuanian men were fleeing the unwanted induction into the Russian Army. In the United States, coalmines in Pennsylvania and West Virginia were waning in production, and Lithuanian families that had settled in these areas were moving north and west to find more lucrative work. Many came to

Dayton, Ohio.

Father Joseph Gricius served as pastor of Holy Cross until October 28, 1917. His successor was Rev. Michael Cybulskis-Cybelis until 1922. Rev. Vincent Slavynas was appointed pastor on August 12, 1922. Father Cybulskis left on July 26, 1928, and a non-Lithuanian priest, Rev. Frederick Bien, was temporarily placed in charge as administrator. On May 25, 1929, Rev. Simon Bystrais was appointed pastor and remained in that post until August 12, 1935, when he returned to Lithuania. Again, a non-Lithuanian, Rev. S. M. Stephenson, was named administrator until the end of the year.

On December 31, 1935, Rev. Leon J. Praspalius was appointed pastor. During Father Praspalius' pastorate the parish finally emerged from its financial difficulties. The parish debt was paid off by the end of 1941.

The parish now being free from debt, a school building fund was established and preliminary plans drawn up for a school. The following parishioners served as committee members for the school building fund: Frank M. Ambrose (Ambrozaitis), Mary Ann Ambrose (Ambrozaitis), Anthony Fretic, Mrs. Ona Goldick, Charles Goldick, Jr., John Gevat, Mrs. Martha Gevat, Stanley Grincevicius, Joseph Kavalasckas, Jr., Mrs. Pauline Kubilius, Mrs. Isabelle Latos, Stanely Lucas, Mrs. Mary Lucas, Alfons Monas, Joseph Noreikas, Mrs. Anele Pet-

kus, Michael J. Petkus, Mrs. Ona Petkus, Peter Petkus, Jr., Michael P. Petkus, Mrs. Monica Petrokas, Mrs. Pauline Pietrzak, Leo Razauskas, John Razauskas, Joseph Reslewic, Joseph Rimkus, Mrs. Anna Rugienis, Mrs. Anna Savickas, John Scott, Mrs. Elizabeth Sinkevicius, Mrs. Ada Sinkwitz, Anthony Vaitkus, Mrs. Petronella Valiusis, Mrs. Frances Zelinskas, George A. Zelinskas, Petronella Zelinskas and Frank Zubrick.

This project was terminated at the direction of the diocesan authorities, who considered a school to be too great a burden for the small parish. The money in the school building fund was transferred to the church-remodeling fund.

The third influx of immigrants from Lithuania occurred in the mid- and late-1940s. This immigration was the result of World War II befalling Europe and the forceful occupation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union. Among the immigrants was Rev. Vaclovas Katarskis.

Father Katarskis was appointed assistant pastor on March 5, 1948. When the pastor, Father Praspalius, was seriously injured on December 26, 1956 and did not regain his full capabilities, Father Katarskis was appointed administrator of the parish. Due to his efforts a new rectory was constructed. Work began in August 1958 and was completed the following spring. Father Katarskis remained as administrator until September 10, 1960. Upon his resignation, Rev. Dr. Titas Narbutas was appointed administrator. Fa-



Lithuanian Leaders in Dayton, Ohio

Back Row (l to r):

Elaine Pacovsky — Pres. Sarysis
Judith Petrokas — Pres. Altar Society, LAC rep.

Jim Geiger — Pres. Parish Council
Aaron Geiger — Organist. Choir dir., Dir. Of Accolades

Michael Petkus — Pres. Lith. Social Club
Rob Pant — Pres. Knights of Lith. Council 96

Middle Row (l to r):

Frances R. Petkus — Sec/Treas. Sarysis
Connie Geiger — Chair. Worship Commission

Elinor Sluzas — Pres. Lith. Cultural Council

Front Row (l to r):

Jonas Kvietyis — Pres. St. Peter's Society

ther Katarskis moved to his new assignment at St. Albert the Great Parish in Dayton, Ohio.

Father Narbutas began planning the church-remodeling project. He informed the bishop about the state of the Church in Lithuania, where the Communists had closed many places of worship, and the faithful were being bitterly persecuted, and that both the older and newer immigrants and many of the American-born generation wished to see Lithuanian motifs incorporated into the church. For this reason, approval was given to engage the Lithuanian architect John Mulokas of Chicago.

The remodeling project was awarded to Chicago contractor Valerian Sodeika, who started work on December 11, 1963. The contractor, aided by Chicagoan Bronius Maciukevicius, did the carpentry and cabinet work. Painting was done by Chicagoan Vitas Jucas. The remaining work was done by local subcontractors.

Two columns were erected in front of the church. Lithuanian designs were imbedded in the brickwork of the front walls. Glass doors with Lithuanian emblems were installed. The new bell tower incorporated Lithuanian motifs.

Inside the church, the sanctuary was redesigned with some of the walls being removed. Partitions with faceted slab glass panels were erected on both sides of the altar. The center aisle floor design was made by Mrs. Brone Jaimakis of Chicago.

The faceted slab glass windows and stained glass behind the altar were made by the Adolf Valeska Studios of Chicago. The thick stained glass was imported from France. The scene behind the altar portrays a panorama of crosses. The windows show Lithuanian style shrines, among which are the following symbols: The Holy Trinity, Our Blessed Mother, Passion of the Redemption, and the Seven Sacraments.

The cross above the main altar was made by Buracas. The bas-reliefs of the altars of Our Lady of the Gates of Dawn and of Saint Casimir were made by Peter Vebra of Chicago. The altars were built of Finnish veneer by Javarauskas of Chicago.

The remodeled Holy Cross Church with its original Lithuanian motif style is pleasing and attractive to parishioners and visitors alike. This

is the only church of this style and with this type of original stained glass designs in the entire United States. The parishioners of Holy Cross have been generous with their gifts for the remodeling project. The rededication of the newly remodeled church was held on November 22, 1964, by Archbishop Karl J. Alter.

In 1964 the project of erecting a Lithuanian style cross on the parish grounds was undertaken. The "Shrine of Three Crosses" was erected in June 1965, in memory of the many crosses, which were destroyed by the Communists in Lithuania. The Shrine was dedicated in honor of the martyrs for faith and freedom in Lithuania and other captive nations; and in memory of "All living and deceased parishioners and friends of Holy Cross Parish."

Today, Lithuania is free. The Shrine was the site of the Dayton celebration when the independence of the Baltic States was once again recognized by the Free World. The Shrine serves as a symbol of Lithuanian heritage and a constant reminder of what was once 50 years of Communist persecution and what could be again, if we allow it.

Rev. Leon J. Praspalius, former pastor of Holy Cross, passed away on April 20, 1969. Father Titus Narbutas remained as pastor of Holy Cross from 1960 until his death on May 19, 1972. Later that year Father Vaclovas Katarskis returned to Holy Cross and was appointed pastor. On December 20, 1993, Father Katarskis passed away after a long illness. Once again a non-Lithuanian, Father Michael Holloran, was named pastor of Holy Cross on January 1, 1994. Father Holloran is currently pastor of Holy Cross, but also serves as pastor of three other parishes in the area: St. Adalbert's the Polish church, St. Stephen's the Hungarian church, and Our Lady of the Rosary.

The Sunday Mass is now said in English with the readings and petitions recited in both English and Lithuanian. Hymns are sung in both English and Lithuanian.

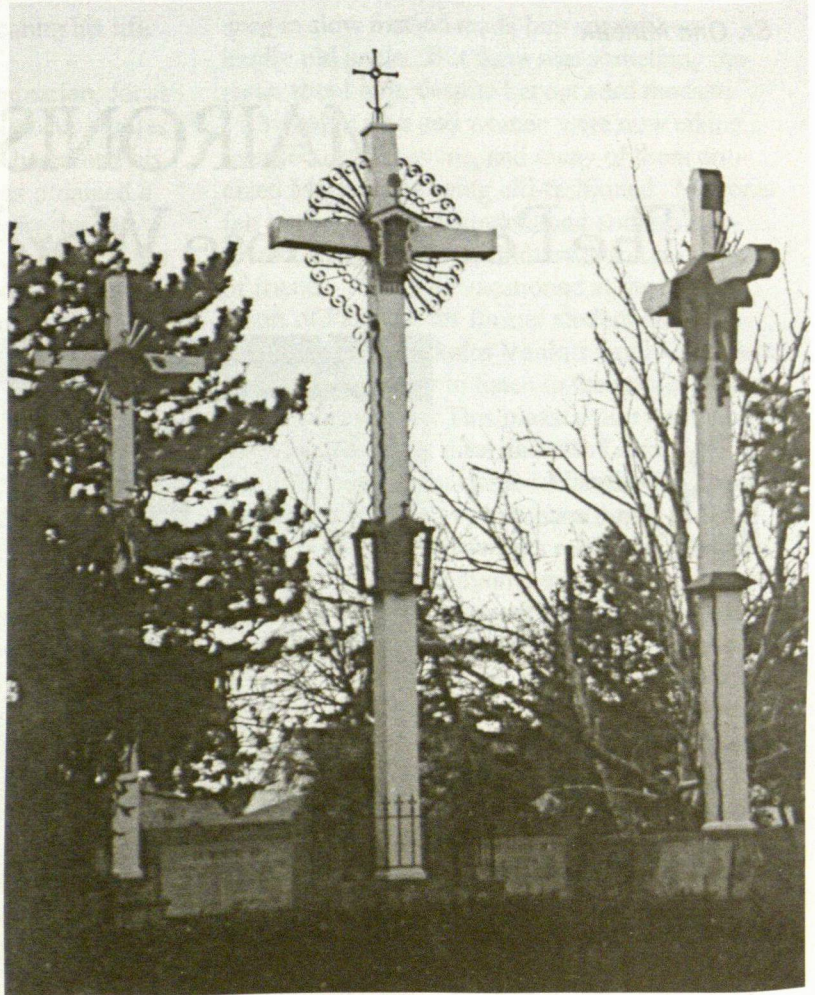
The organizations of Holy Cross play an important part in the Lithuanian Community. St. Peter's Society is the oldest being organized December 7, 1902. Through the efforts of St. Peter's Society the land was purchased for the

church. The Society was responsible for organizing committees for the formation of Holy Cross Church. The current President is Jonas Kvietyis. Sarysis was organized in 1925 and is actually the forerunner of the Parish Council. Sarysis consists of a representative of all active organizations within Holy Cross Church, and its current President is Mrs. Elaine Pacovsky. The Altar Society was established in 1915. It concerns itself with the care and decoration of the altars. Current President is Judith Petrokas.

The Knights of Lithuania Council 96 was first organized in 1917, but liquidated in 1921 and revived in 1928. Current President is Robert Pant. Three national conventions of the Knights of Lithuania have been held in Dayton with the most recent being in 1997.

The Lithuanian Cultural Council was organized in 1974 mainly for the purpose to be the representative body for the Dayton-sponsored International Festival. This festival continues to this day and attracts over 40,000 over the three-day event. Lithuanians have been involved with this event since 1974 and have one of the largest booths in the festival. The cultural display has received an award every year with most of them being the first place award. The Cultural Council has also brought to Dayton many Lithuanian artists over the years. For the past six years the Council has sponsored the annual Kučios in December with over 120 in attendance each year. The current President is Mrs. Elinor Sluzas.

The Vejeliai Dancers were organized in 1974 mainly for the purpose of performing at the Dayton International Festival. They also have performed at many other functions around the area.



The current director is Kristy Geiger.

The two social organizations are the Lithuanian Anglers Club with the current President being Walter Lastoskie and the Lithuanian Social Club. Its current President is Michael Petkus.

Holy Cross Church is still the center of the Lithuanian Community in Dayton. All cultural events and activities are generated by parishioners of Holy Cross Church. Many of the parishioners are third and fourth generation Lithuanians, but they are steeped in the Lithuanian culture and extremely proud of their Lithuanian heritage. ♦

Sr. Ona Mikaila

MAIRONIS: The Poet Whose Words Live On

Boris Pasternak, of *Doctor Zhivago* fame, once said that there are two kinds of poets: those who die while still living and those who never die. For Lithuanians the world over Maironis is not a dead poet, but a living symbol of hope, of national resilience, of undying faith that suffering leads to glory. For Lithuanians, Maironis is not just a poet, he is the poet. Every Lithuanian worth his /or her/ salt can quote a line or two from one of his poems.

Even those who have not had the opportunity to learn Lithuanian well, probably know the hymns “Apsaugok, Aukščiausias” and “Marija, Marija” – two of Maironis’ religious poems set to music and loved by generations of Lithuanians. “Lietuva brangi” – in many ways similar to “America the Beautiful” – is regarded as a second national anthem by many Lithuanians for it celebrates the beauty of their homeland and their love for her.

“Maironis” was the poet’s pen name, first used in 1891; his real name was Jonas Mačiulis. He lived and died in Lithuania /1862-1932/; his lifetime of 70 years spanning two centuries. This



year there will be many celebrations of the 70th anniversary of his death in Kaunas where he studied and later lived and worked for many years.

Maironis was a many-talented man of several professions: priest, professor, poet, and even mathematician. His was a contradictory character: a sensitive, romantic introvert with a strict and stern official exterior.

Born into a fairly prosperous farming family in northern Lithuania, Jonas and his three sisters grew up with the Lithuanian language and customs. This was a dark period in Lithuanian history when the country was under the oppressive rule of the Russian Czars.

After the rebellion of 1863, the oppression got even worse.

A highlight in Jonas’ childhood was receiving Confirmation from the hands of Bishop Valančius, a hero to all Lithuanians who valued their religious and cultural roots. Jonas’ father, a stern, taciturn, and domineering man, went to great pains to have his only son educated. He was sent to school in Kaunas and later attended the University of Kiev for a year, but then decided to enter the Kaunas Seminary and become

SR. ONA MIKAILA is a writer and editor of *Bendradarbis* and belongs to the order of the Sisters <http://www.efn.org/~valdas/> of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, Connecticut. The poem, “Summer Nights” can be found on <http://www.efn.org/~valdas/> along with other Lithuanian poets’ works.

a priest. This was his way of dedicating his life to God and his country.

As a talented and promising seminarian, Jonas was sent to St. Petersburg to complete his studies at the Theological Academy. Here he earned his Master's degree in theology and was ordained a priest. But since his high school years, he had been writing poetry in Lithuanian. In 1895 at the age of 27, he published his first book of poems and became Maironis the poet. This book was called "Pavasario balsai" or "Voices of Spring" and it became his signature work. Six editions were published during his lifetime and many more after his death.

Maironis wrote lyric, narrative, and dramatic poetry, but it was the lyric poems that captured the hearts and minds of the Lithuanian people, making him the best-loved poet of all time. Maironis voiced the hopes and sorrows of an entire nation. His direct and emotionally powerful lines spoke to everyone.

Maironis' poems celebrating nature and love of homeland would now be classed as romantic. He was convinced that once Lithuania awakened to her national identity and was energized to fight for her freedom, nothing could stop her. Like an ice-bound river breaking free in the spring flood, the rising tide of patriotism carried the waves to youthful enthusiasm which would eventually achieve the goal of independence.

In 1909 Maironis returned to Lithuania and was given the position of rector of the Kaunas Seminary. He had been living in St. Petersburg for 15 years and had sorely missed his homeland. In 1918 Lithuania gained her independence and began her life as a free nation. At this time the poet-priest, now raised to the rank of monsignor, was 56 years old, middle-aged, and not happy with the national scene. It seemed to him that the Lithuanian people had lost their former idealism and had sunk into petty political squabbles.

Maironis taught theology at the Kaunas Seminary and also at the University. One of his students, Fr. Stasys Yla, remembered him many years later: "Maironis would quietly glide into the classroom. Sitting down unobtrusively in the professor's chair he would begin his lecture...His rather large head, wide face and short neck with massive shoulders and general imposing appear-

ance in slow motion made him seem like a kindly old uncle...But there was something majestic about him, despite his outward modesty".

Younger men and women were now taking over the literary scene, and many of them criticized Maironis as being old-fashioned. Maironis felt himself to be misunderstood and misinterpreted. He gradually withdrew to his own circle of friends. When he vacationed at the seaside resort of Palanga, his former student and long-time friend Fr. Mykolas Vaitkus would coax him out to the long pier to listen to the young people singing his verses. This pleased him immensely.

When Maironis died in 1932, Lithuania mourned her national poet. After the Soviets occupied Lithuania, they tried to obliterate Maironis from the people's memory. During the Stalin era, many of his family members were exiled to Siberia. Maironis' reputation fluctuated with every new trend in Soviet policy. During the Khrushchev thaw, Maironis' poems were published in two slim volumes. "Pavasario balsai" was reprinted in 1958. Ten years later Vanda Zaborskaitė, a literary critic, published an in-depth study of Maironis' life and work. A second edition appeared in 1987.

Meanwhile the Lithuanian diaspora carried Maironis' poems with them to all parts of the globe. Collections of his verse were reprinted in Germany, Rome, England, and the USA. Lithuanians in the free world clung to Maironis as to a life preserver in a stormy sea. As he had once given voice to an oppressed people in his own time, so now once again he was cherished as the prophet of rebirth for an enslaved nation.

When the winds of change began to blow in Lithuania in 1987, the first sparks of rebirth began with Maironis. On the occasion of the 125th anniversary of his birth, a crowd of 7,000 people gathered in Kaunas at his tomb in the wall of Kaunas Cathedral. They sang "Lietuva brangi". This was the beginning of the freedom movement that would end in a dash for independence in 1991.

Maironis' closest living relative is his niece Danutė Lipčiūtė-Augienė, living in the USA in Putnam, Connecticut. The poet's great, great niece lives in Kaunas, Lithuania. Virginia Paplauskienė is curator of the Maironis Literary

Museum. Part of the museum contains eight rooms used by the poet and now restored with their original furnishings, paintings, and memorabilia. The museum also exhibits the work and portraits of other Lithuanian writers. It is the largest of its kind in Lithuania. In front of the museum sits a statue of Maironis carved in black granite by the sculptor Gediminas Jakubonis. Maironis sits in a meditative pose – a once and eternal poet. ♦



SUMMER NIGHTS

Peaceful charm of summer nights,
Not a leaf in the treetop stirs.
All is tranquil, all is quiet
Peace that only stars disturb.

All is sleeping, all is quiet,
Dreams of love the world enfolds.
Full of yearning, dreams inspired
Lull the heart, the heart consoles.

Summer nights of peaceful charm,
Grieving hearts with rest you lure!
Grief immense the earth endures
Only you breathe peace and calm.

Peace and calm! With magic force
You send Nature off to sleep.
Can't you soothe my wild desires?
What should I feel anguish for?



All the world I would embrace,
I would love Almighty God,
Lasting Beauty I would grasp!
What am I despairing of?

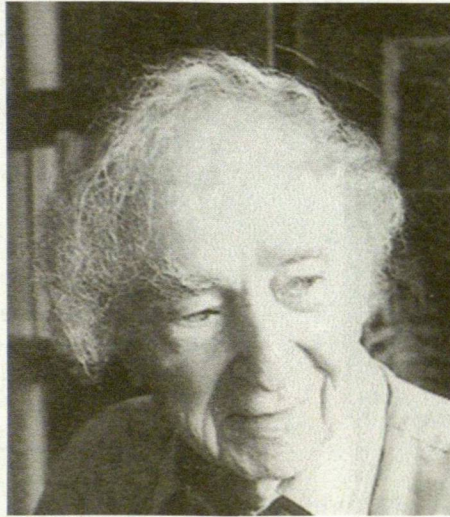
1920

(Translated by Peter Tempest)

A Farewell to Bernardas Brazdžionis...

Lithuania's 20th Century Poet

One of Lithuania's most celebrated poets of the 20th century, Bernardas Brazdžionis, died at his home in Los Angeles, his granddaughter Dalytė Lovett announced on July 12. Baltic News Service (BNS) said he died July 11 after a long illness; he was 96.



burden of injustice on his back and the jewel of faith in his heart, calling to God at all the cross-roads of the world."

Brazdžionis' poetry, written in exile, dealt with themes of loyalty and love for the motherland, and often was set to music and sung at patriotic gatherings. He was a distinctly Catholic poet, and often his poetry took on a mystic character.

Many considered Brazdžionis, who emigrated to the West as the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania in 1944, "the patriarch of Lithuanian émigré poetry" and "knowledge of Brazdžionis' poetry can be taken as a litmus test for one's degree of patriotism," according to *Lithuania: In Her Own Words*, a 1997 compilation of Lithuanian literature.

While Brazdžionis was already an established poet during Lithuania's first period of independence, his stature increased in exile. "He reacted to exile with fiercely patriotic verse in which the outrage against the injustice to his nation and the defiance of tyranny were raised to a highly emotional, almost hysterical pitch," wrote Lithuanian literary critic Rimvydas Šilbajoris. "Many of his poems centered around the image of a weary traveler with the

Brazdžionis completed his secondary and higher education, studying Lithuanian Literature and Linguistics. After graduating from the Lithuanian State University in Kaunas he worked as an editor of a number of literary publications. He was also curator of the Maironis Museum of Literature.

Brazdžionis began publishing poetry while still a high school student; later, as a University student, Brazdžionis' poetry became increasingly popular. He was forced to flee Lithuania during the Second World War and eventually resettled in the United States in 1949, where he actively participated in Lithuanian émigré life publishing many volumes of poetry, as well as books for children. He was also an editor of the magazine *Lithuanian Days* in Los Angeles.

Brazdžionis published some 50 books and

THE ARTICLE'S SOURCES include Baltic News Service, The City Paper, and <http://www.efn.org/~valdas/> — where other Lithuanian poets' works can be found in translated form.

poetry collections during his lifetime. In 1998, he was awarded the First Class Order of Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, one of the country's highest state medals. Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus sent his condolences to the family of Brazdžionis. His remains were buried in Petrašiūnų Cemetery in Kaunas on July 31. All of Lithuania's churches celebrated Mass at the time of burial in reverence to the great poet. ♦

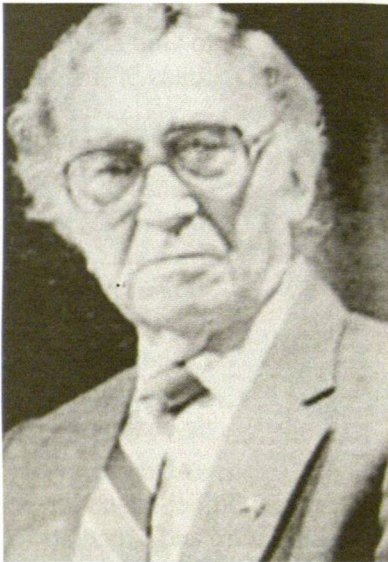


IMAGE OF THE FUTURE

Like a moss-bee, as evening wanes,
our life will take flight back to the hive, the song
already fallen still, the white frost still and fallen.
Like God's thoughts, we shall gather at the threshold.

On gray moss in a pine wood, her heart turned gray,
youth tearful for her prayers astray will find redress in
heaven.
And you, beloved, in one night perhaps grown gray with
me,
blossoms of peony no longer in your cheeks...



Thus we shall see ourselves in distant firelight,
and for ourselves, from shadows, raise the ruined an-
cestral home.

Till the sun gutters, flowers the sphere, the ring gold as
a grape
and we shall see our first love, veiled in white, walk past
us.

Potentates will bestow their wealth and palaces,
and queens, their emeralds and pearls.
In your name, Jesus, in the pastoral game of death,
our sweetest shield, our paradisal consolation.

And priests and sisters, walled in their cold stone,
and noble hierarchs and low-born servants
wandered from moonlight into moonlight,
O Lord, and I have not found the path to your domain.

Towards it, the echo ever by our side, through fields,
towards it, one dry juniper needle in our hands,
bare-headed and without adornments, we shall travel
along the ice-locked way of All Souls' Day.

The rivulet of mystery will burst out of the mountain.
Our souls will bow down, tired, drink their fill, recover,
more azure than the opal of the rainbow
garlanded in the holy herbs of the high feast.

Forget man's vain preoccupations, his wish to forget,
his promises to you, earth, not to die - and many, oh
many dreams!
For darkness falls, the ship appears already and the
waves
crash, as without rest I draw near our Father's haven.

(Translated by Clark Mills)

Jeanne Dorr

a JULY CHRISTMAS

The hardest part of writing any article is getting started. It is especially difficult to write a Christmas article when it's the end of July, and the temperature is ninety-five degrees. Right now my mind really isn't on a Christmas tree or a glowing fireplace with stockings hanging from the mantel. At this precise moment, my thoughts are lingering on a nice cool ice cream sundae. But so many children are dependent on you, the Bridges readers, for their only Christmas present, so I guess I better clear the ice cream sundae from my head and get to more serious thoughts.

I just returned from spending a month in Lithuania. Actually, I returned on Friday and my luggage joined me on Tuesday. It's a long way from Amsterdam to New Jersey, so I have no complaints. I'm just happy to have it back.

I hope that in the coming months you will join me in my travels. We will share some funny moments, and we will shed a few tears. We will make some new friends, as well as revisit some of our favorites.

Many of you have asked about the two Jurgitas, and I will write more about them in a future article. You will also read about St. Clare's new elevator, which at one point was only an impos-



sible dream. But you helped to make it a reality. Regardless of where I went in Lithuania, I saw evidence of your love and generosity. So please check your Bridges expiration date, I really hope you won't have to miss any of our trips through Lithuania.

For the past two years, I have asked your help in providing as many children in Lithuania as we can with a small Christmas gift. When we see our stores decorated and the commercials on television, it's very hard to imagine a child with no Christmas tree and not even one small gift.

For many children in Lithuania, the ideal family with the glowing fireplace and the house decorated with holly doesn't exist. In fact, they have no idea what an ideal family even means. As for the fireplace, they are lucky if they have wood to heat the house. The only evergreens they might see are on their way outside to use the outhouse in bitter cold weather. It's hard to imagine that in the 21st century so many people still have no inside plumbing. But in all my trips to Lithuania, I have never heard one complaint

JEANNE DORR is a member of the Board of Directors of Lithuanian Orphan Care, a branch of the Human Services Council of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. She is also a Social Studies teacher in New Jersey.

about this situation. I guess it bothers me more than it bothers them. There is no Christmas tree with beautifully wrapped gifts underneath. In fact, Christmas will be no different than any other day.

Last year your response was overwhelming, and you were the warmth in the lives of these children. In a few cases, the parents really don't care. However, the vast majority of parents love their children, and it breaks their hearts that Christmas has to pass without anything special. There simply is no money for such extravagances.

Why write in July for Christmas? By the time the article is published, and it reaches your homes we won't be that far away from the holiday season. Your checks must reach Chicago, and then the proceeds are sent to Lithuania. There, the volunteers must have time to shop, wrap, and arrange distribution of the gifts. It's a long process, but it brings smiles to so many children and relief to parents and grandparents because now there is a present for Christmas.

The Christmas project basically centers on Countryside Children's Fund, which is directed by Regina Svoba and Gražina Landsbergis' work with children. They are two different organizations, and they have different ways of organizing their gifts.

Countryside Children's Fund arranges for Kalėdų Senelis or Father Christmas to visit the poorest village schools throughout Lithuania. This usually happens in early December, and the younger children are beside themselves with an-

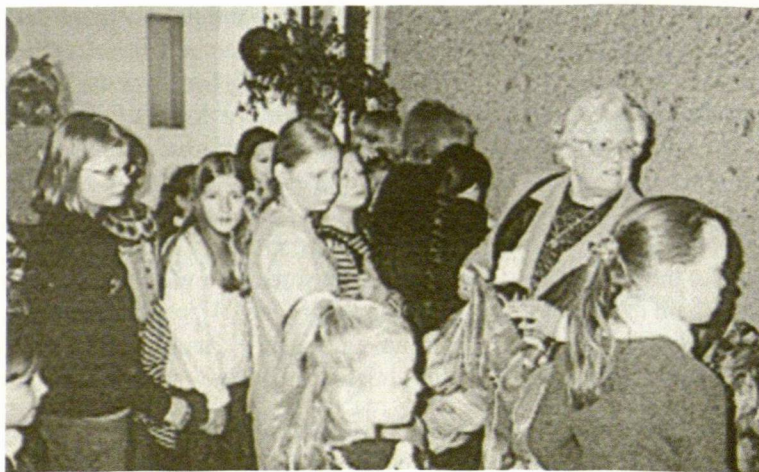
icipation. They learn poems and practice songs because after all everyone knows that Father Christmas expects something in return. Often he is greeted with special drawings the children have made for him. There are even places where he arrives in a horse drawn sled.

Although the older children do not receive any gifts, they are just as excited as the little ones. They help them learn their poems and practice their songs with them. Oh, what a special day it is when word is received that Father Christmas will be arriving at a particular school. Even the teachers are excited because they know what these visits mean to the children. Small gifts are given out as well as cookies or candy. There is never a complaint because often this is the one and only gift each child will receive this Christmas.

This summer I was visiting in the country, and we started to talk about Christmas. I told the children I would love to see Lithuania when it was blanketed with beautiful, white snow. It had to be like a scene from a picture post card.

Then I asked two little ones if they received anything from Father Christmas last year. Both sadly shook their heads and said Father Christmas didn't get to their school. Because Lithuanian country children are always conscious of the fact that there is very little money at home, the thought of having no money is never far from their thoughts.

The little girl was adorable; she was probably about eight years old. She looked at me and very solemnly told me that Father Christmas probably



Children eagerly await the arrival of Santa Claus.

*Photo:
Gražina Landsbergienė*

did not have enough money to go to her school last year. She knew about money problems. But she did have hopes that he might be having a better year this coming Christmas.

Her companion, a boy about her age, had his own theory. He believed that Father Christmas didn't know where he lived or what school he was attending. Apparently, he moved quite a few times during the school year. There was no anger from either one of them, but there was hope that this year Father Christmas' financial problems would be solved and that the young boy could stay in one place long enough for Father Christmas to find his school.

After the children left, the social worker told me about the boy. The reason he kept moving was that his mother and her four children were squatters. They would find an abandoned house and live there until someone reported them to the police. Her husband was dead, and three of the four boys had been diagnosed with tuberculosis. I did manage to get out to her latest living quarters and will write about that in a future article.

Mrs. Landsbergis invites as many children as she possibly can to her annual Christmas party. The number of children is dependent on the amount of money we raise for both organizations.

Once again, everyone is expected to "earn" his or her gift. If you have no musical talent or you can't dance, you are expected to memorize a poem and recite it. Very often, Professor Landsbergis stops by to help distribute the gifts. Always careful not to blow Father Christmas' cover, he explains to the children that very generous people from far away America help Father Christmas gather the gifts. This adds a special importance to the gifts.

The gifts are wrapped in pretty paper, courtesy of volunteers. Some children hesitate to even open them and sit holding the gift and staring at the paper. The shiny paper is to be cherished. It is neatly folded and taken home along with the gift. The gift is usually a small toy, coloring book and crayons, warm socks or gloves. As an added bonus, there might be some candy.

Last year we calculated the cost of each bag to be approximately one dollar. However, as I am writing this article, the value of the dollar is

dropping in Lithuania. If it rises; all the better for us. But we have to be realistic and figure the cost of the gifts to be about a dollar and a half this year.

Last year when I wrote about Christmas in July, I dedicated this project to thirteen year old Artūras who died earlier in the year. Artūras wanted a used, blue bicycle. After years of suffering, his leukemia ended his short life. He never got his bicycle, and his dream never came true. I visited Artūras' grave where his classmates erected a wooden cross in his memory. Our last meeting and the blue bicycle flashed in front of me, and I was determined that this would be Artūras' project each Christmas. This project would be dedicated to the young boy whose life was taken from him after so much suffering.

When I met his mother, she cried bitterly as I held her. It was our first meeting since his death. After I told her of the special Christmas project she cried again, but this time they were tears of joy. As long as we can keep this Christmas project going, Artūras' spirit will continue to live. He didn't live long enough to have the joy of riding a used, blue bicycle but because of him, other children will have Father Christmas in their lives.

Thank you for sharing my first journey with me. This money will be collected through Lithuanian Orphan Care. If you would like to sponsor a child, the cost is \$150 a year. If you would like to make a donation to help Father Christmas, please make a note on your tax deductible check that this is for Christmas gifts. You are the moving force behind this Christmas project. Let us keep Artūras' spirit alive. Without your generosity, there would be no visits from Father Christmas to these children.

I would like to thank the members of the Lithuanian Orphan Care Committee, especially its president, Birutė Jasaitis. Once again, because of this Christmas project, I have managed to pile more work onto these dedicated volunteers. If I know you, the *Bridges* readers, as well as I think I do, you will keep them very, very busy with your donations.

Please send your tax-deductible gifts to:

Lithuanian Orphan Care
2711 W. 71st St
Chicago, Il. 60629 ♦

Edward Baranauskas



A Day in June to Remember

A solemn graduation ceremony was held on Thursday, June 6 at the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy in Vilnius with the awarding of the rank of Lieutenant to 110 graduates.

In the square of the Academy, the Commander-in-Chief of Lithuania's Armed Forces, President Valdas Adamkus, performed the same solemn tradition that goes back to the days of President Antanas Smetona, the last Chief Executive of pre-war Lithuania. As each one of the graduating students knelt on his right knee before him, holding their hats in their left hand, President Smetona would touch the left shoulder strap of each graduate by saying: "Be reikalo nepakelk, be garbės nenuleisk" – "Don't raise it when there is no need, and do not lower it without honor"

The sword is the symbol of invincibility, manhood, independence, and truth. Each graduate gives a solemn oath from that moment on, and swears to faithfully serve the nation and to defend with all his strength, the nation's freedom and de-

mocracy.

Actually, the ritual of this ceremony can be traced back to the Middle Ages when a man was conferred into the Knights by being touched with the tip of the sword.

This day was special, in more ways than one, for it also marked the Tenth Anniversary of the founding of "The General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania" (Generolo Jono Žemaičio Lietuvos Karo Akademija). On November 20, 1998, the academy was named to honor General Žemaitis, one of the leaders of a partisan group that fought the occupying Red Army following the end of the war.

This was the first time I had the opportunity to witness such an impressive ceremony. Many of the graduates' loved ones were here with their cameras, bringing flowers to hand to their beloved newly commissioned lieutenants following the activities. Many foreign military dignitaries were seated above me at the speaker's podium. From what I could observe, high-ranking officers from

EDWARD BARANAUSKAS has been writing for BRIDGES for several years. With his recent move to Lithuania, he has expanded his subjects to include "an American's point of view" of what it is like to live in Lithuania. Photos by E. Baranauskas.

countries like Poland, Denmark, Germany, and Estonia, just to name a few, were here.

At 10 o'clock, the parade of undergraduate cadets began, marching from another courtyard, between buildings, at the other side of the Academy, to take their places at the far and near end of the main Academy courtyard. There was a gap in between these cadets. The graduates stood at attention at the far end of the courtyard by themselves, and when the recorded band music came over the loudspeakers, they marched with much precision to take their places in between the cadets.

I noticed one cadet, flanked on each side by smiling, lovely young ladies wearing the traditional Lithuanian national dress. He was holding, what appeared to me to be, a sheath. At a given signal, all three marched to another cadet waiting in front of the group about to be commissioned. The sword was then removed, and handed over to President Adamkus.

The front row of honorees stepped forward, about ten feet, to another white line, and all knelt on their right knee, holding their hats in their left hand. As each one was tapped on his left shoulder with the sword, he stood up, put on his hat, and saluted the President. Then the President faced the next honoree, and the same procedure continued until all in that row were taken care of.

The new officers then turned, facing to the left, and marched, "squaring" their corners as they turned in the proper military manner to take their places at the rear of the group, and as they did so, the lines of future lieutenants then took several step forward to make room for them. Those next

in line to be "knighted", so to speak, moved even further forward to undergo the same ritual as the others. These precision-like maneuvers impressed me very much and were a pretty sight to see.

The Chaplain of the Academy then bestowed his blessings on all of the new officers, and Major General Jonas Kronkaitis, Commanding Officer of the Lithuanian Army, expressed his congratulations and wished them Godspeed in their new assignments. The ceremonies ended, the cadets and new officers marched off into the courtyard between the Academy buildings, there to be greeted by their loved ones.

After this special day, these new officers will go to their assigned detachments to begin their duties and apply everything they learned at the Academy.

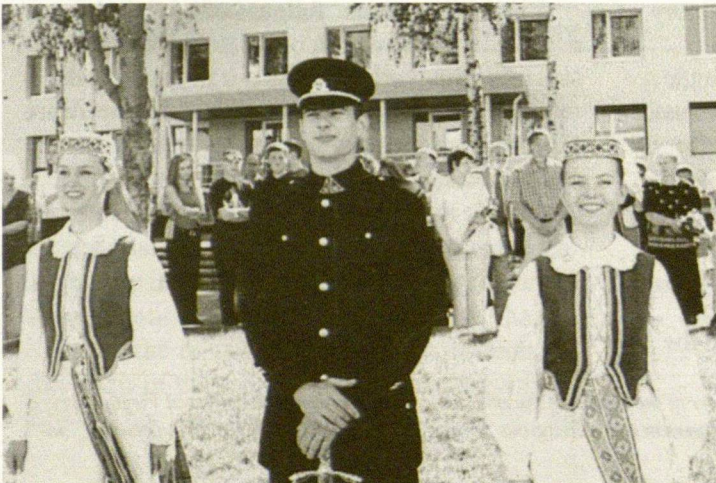
Refreshments were then served to all the guests in the main auditorium. I had the unexpected pleasure of meeting some of the high-ranking Lithuanian officers.

This new generation of officers will follow in the footsteps of their grandfathers and will be the guardians of the freedoms the Lithuanian people did not have for fifty agonizing years.

Footnote:

Jonas Žemaitis (1909-1954) graduated from the Kaunas Military School and the Fontainebleau Artillery School in France. He became involved in the armed resistance movement activities in 1943. In 1948, he was in charge of the Kęstutis district, which encompassed the greater part of western Lithuania, from Kaunas to Klaipėda. In 1949, he was commissioned as a [partisan] general.

On May 30, 1953, after years of being tracked down by the Soviets, he was betrayed. A special grenade was thrown into his bunker, and he suffered a concussion and was arrested. After endless interrogations, physically disabled, he was taken to Moscow and questioned by the head of the NKVD, Lavrenti Beria. General Žemaitis was shot in Butyrki Prison in Moscow on November 26, 1954. ♦



R E F L E C T I O N S

Sr. Margarita Bareikaitė

Adult Christianity

The early Christian martyr St. Ireneus said that Christians need to grow up. A Christian to be truly worthy of the name must “avoid remaining in his infancy when the age for being an adult has arrived”.

Christianity is different from non-Christian religions because at its core is faith in an event, a real historic happening: the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. The other great non-Christian religions affirm the existence of God and of an eternal world opposed to the temporal world in which we now live. But these religions know nothing about a divine intervention of the eternal in time, which gives time consistency and transforms it into history.

As Christians we know that nothing can separate the union in Jesus Christ of the divine nature and human nature. In Jesus the divine and the human are forever united. From the Creation of the world to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, passing through the election of Abraham, the Christian Revelation is that of a sacred history, a story of the marvelous deeds of God. The Bible is the book which documents this sacred history.

The wonderful works of Jesus in the New Testament are continued among us through the sacraments he left in his Church. The Christian, then, is someone who is aware of living at the heart of sacred history in a world in which God never ceases to act, to intervene in the affairs of human beings, to perform His admirable works for their benefit.

We have said that Christianity is faith in God’s intervention in world events through the

person of Jesus Christ. Only this action of God can save human beings. Christianity holds that both man’s body and soul are held captive by evil, and God alone can liberate him from this captivity through grace. No human asceticism can achieve this. A little child, a worker weighed down by his labors, if they believe, are superior to the greatest ascetics. The great Catholic author, Romano Guardini has put it this way, “We are not great religious personalities, we are servants of the Word.”

There have been and are great religious personalities in the world outside Christianity. But Christians have a different priority: obedience to the words of Jesus Christ. Christianity has often used in its liturgy various symbols borrowed from the religions of nature. But behind these symbols is the living God and Father of Jesus Christ. Christianity is the movement of God Who, in Jesus comes to take man by the hand to lead him to Himself. The Christian mission, then, is liberation and transformation of the religious values of paganism. Paganism, or natural religion, had many noble ideals. Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill.

Christianity gives “fullness of life”, it does not condemn the world, only its sin, but rather it sanctifies the world and leads it in the right direction. As adult Christians we need to be aware of what we believe and not be swayed by every passing fancy. ♦

SR. MARGARITA BAREIKAITĖ belongs to the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, CT. She is also the Chairperson of the Religious Affairs Council for the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

C U R R E N T E V E N T S

The Franciscan spirit in book form

The recently published history of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God is *A Celebration of the Franciscan Spirit*; it is also a record of the vision that has been, and continues to be, an integral part of the members of this congregation of women religious. From the humble beginnings of the group of pioneer sisters and their concern for the preservation of the faith of the Lithuanian immigrants to those whose lives continue to be touched today by the life and ministry of the Sisters in Brazil, Lithuania, and the USA.

Through the work of Eileen Gimper, the author of this historical publication, we are able to visualize the journey of the sisters from the time of the foundation of the congregation, some 80 years ago.

Eileen, herself a graduate of St. Francis Academy, the private high school under the direction of the congregation, has researched the necessary material for the content of this book for the past two years. In compiling and organizing the information that was so necessary to the authenticity of this undertaking, she has captured the essence of the energy, influence, and spirit of the women of this congregation through her informative description of the lives

and times of these religious sisters.

Included in the pages of this text, there is a record of the vision which has sustained the members on the journey of the past 80 years, as well as a call to move forward recognizing the presence of God in all that is part of the fabric of the lives of the sisters.

The formal presentation of the publication of this history was made to the members of the community at a recent meeting of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, who gathered together on June 18-19-20, 2002 in Pittsburgh, at their annual Assembly of Corporate Reflection. These yearly gatherings are conducted for the purpose of important and timely discussion regarding the community's future projections and plans.

The presentation of this history will enable the sisters and all those who have worked so closely with the congregation to review fond memories of the many events which have woven themselves into the tapestry which has become the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God.

For additional information regarding this publication, please call 412-885-7212. ♦

— *Sister Janet Gardner*



The sisters started to build their motherhouse and ancillary buildings in 1922. They included a school, which is now a daycare center and retreat houses.

Photo: www.angelfire.com/pa2/lithcitizenssociety

Literary competition for poetry



Memorial for poet Pranas Lembertas and family located in Paežerėlių Cemetery, Lithuania was designed by architect Edmundas Arbas, Santa Monica, Ca.

A literary competition, for all aspiring writers in Lithuania, was established ten years ago in the name of Pranas Lembertas at the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. It has been very successful: each year awarding 500 dollars in prizes to the young authors of best essays or best poems.

This year, on the 105th anniversary of Pranas Lembertas birth (September 18, 1897), the finalists and the professorial evaluation committee will be gathering at nearby Gerdžiūnų school hall (September 13, 2002) where the winners will be announced and the prizes issued. After the ceremony, the Memorial will be visited. ♦

— *Alé Ruta*

Medininkai tragedy remembered

A commemoration ceremony of the tragic events at the Medininkai border check point on the Lithuanian border of Belarus 11 years ago was held on July 31 in the morning. Seven Lithuanian customs officials and police officers were brutally killed by Soviet OMON forces in the early hours of July 31 in 1991.

Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus signaled his respect and gratitude to the devoted sons of Lithuania at the place where they had been massacred. Seimas Speaker Artūras Paulauskas, representatives of interior ministry, and the customs department gathered in Medininkai also. The only survivor of the bloody tragedy, Tomas Šernas, a former customs official who became a priest of the Reformation Church last year, were among those who arrived to the border check-point.

"It is difficult to forget what I saw that morning in this place, right after the massacre. I can still see them today lying in blood. Honest Lithuanian officers died when on duty. They

could be accused only of doing their job, the job, which has great meaning – to protect their Homeland," Paulauskas spoke.

On July 31, 1991 seven Lithuanian border guard officers : Mindaugas Balavakas, Antanas Musteikis, Juozas Janonis, Algimantas Juozakas, Algirdas Kazlauskas, Stanislovas Orlovicius, Ričardas Rabavičius, were severely hurt and later died. Tomas Šernas was the only survivor and witness of the bloody tragedy at Lithuanian and Belarus state frontier outpost that night.

Those responsible have not been convicted until now and remain free, as Russia's prosecutor general's office has been ignoring Lithuania's pleas to hand over the accused.

"It is very difficult to speak, when the organizers and executors of the tragedy are free. But I believe, they are not to have peace until the end of their days," Seimas speaker said. ♦

— *The Baltic News Service*

New House Resolution to take note

Rep. Elton Gallegly, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on International Relations of the U.S. House of Representatives, introduced House Resolution 468 on June 27, 2002. At this point it has been referred to the House Committee on International Relations.

H. Res 468 was introduced under the official title of: "Affirming the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), supporting continued United States participation in NATO, ensuring that the enlargement of NATO proceeds in a manner consistent with United States interests, and for other purposes." Its short title is the "Transatlantic Security and NATO Enhancement Resolution of 2002".

Co-sponsors of the resolution are Rep. Doug Bereuter, Rep. Christopher Cox, and Rep. Tom Lantos.

The Resolution's summary follows:

Transatlantic Security and NATO Enhancement Resolution of 2002 – Declares that it is U.S. policy that: (1) NATO should remain the primary institution through which European and North American allies address security issues of transatlantic concern; (2) NATO members should reaffirm, at the Prague Summit in the Fall of 2002, NATO's importance; (3) NATO should continue to strengthen national and collective capacities to respond to new threats, make clear commitments to remedy shortfalls in specified areas, and ensure a more equitable sharing of contributions; and (4) the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense should fully use their offices to encourage the NATO allies to commit the resources necessary to upgrade their capabilities.

Calls for NATO to: (1) seek to strengthen

its relations with the Russian Federation; and (2) extend invitations at the Summit for accession negotiations to any appropriate candidate country that meets the objectives and targets for NATO membership.

Expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that: (1) specified candidate countries should be commended on significant progress made toward meeting objectives for NATO membership; (2) the most qualified candidate countries should be invited to

begin the accession process to join the Alliance at the Prague Summit, should accede on a common date before the next NATO summit, and should continue to participate in the Membership Action Plan until accession; and (3) the NATO enlargement process should continue beyond the inclusion of such candidates.

U.S. Congressman Elton Gallegly visited Lithuania from Aug. 6 to the 11th and met with President Valdas Adamkus, Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas, Minister of Foreign Affairs Antanas Valionis, Minister of Defence Linas Linkevičius, Chairman of the Seimas Foreign Affairs Committee Gediminas Kirkilas, U.S. embassy officials, and others to discuss a broad range of issues in U.S. – Lithuanian relations.

Gallegly was accompanied by his wife, Janice Gallegly, Ms. Paula Sheil, and Mr. Tom Sheil.

Changes in the status of the Resolution can be found on the Internet at <http://thomas.loc.gov/> when one types in the search for House Resolution 468. Contact your Congressman to urge him or her to support this Resolution. ♦



Russia hands over evidence on USSR occupation to Lithuania

An historical dossier on the period between 1939 and 1946, which turned highly tragic for then-independent Lithuania, will be expanded with fresh archive documents from Russia.

The Lithuanian Archive Department has received a collection of microfilms and diazo copies of documents from the Russian State Military Archive. This was organized under a cooperation agreement (1999) between the Lithuanian Archive Department and Russian Federal Service of Archives.

The relayed collection consists of copies of documents and intelligence reports (1940-1941) on internal organization and stationing places of the Lithuanian armed forces, air forces, border posts, weapons, ammunition, economic situation of the country, and descriptions of the territory.

The officials of the Department said these documents evidenced preparations for the intrusion of (USSR) Red Army into Lithuania and the process thereof.

According to historians, the most valuable documents in the set are papers (1940) of the USSR Baltic military district about the reorganization of Lithuanian troops into the so-called People's Army and later on into the rifle-men unit 29 of the Red Army.

The second part of collection represents document microfilms and diazo copies of USSR's chief board for war prisoners and interned persons (years 1939-1946). These contain facts about filtration and jailing of Lithuanian people in NKVD concentration camps, camps that functioned on the territory of Lithuania (cemeteries for war prisoners, grave-site schemes, and lists of dead prisoners), and lists of war prisoner camps, which existed on USSR territory in 1945.

The whole set of archive documents from Russia will be stored in Lithuania's special archive. In the future, the officials expect to replenish this set with new diazo copies of documents from Russia. ♦

— *The Baltic News Service*

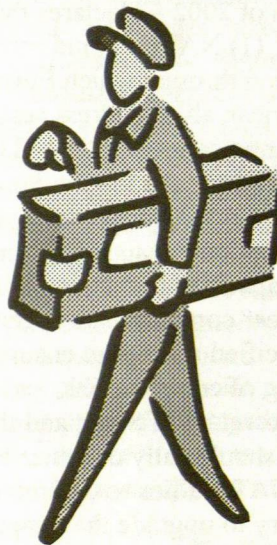
Editor's Note...

I've received several letters asking for more information about how to send packages to Lithuania.

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